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Parent's Rights Brochure

Dear Parents: Your child has been referred for or is currently receiving special education services to provide for his or her individual educational needs. This brochure is designed to assist you in understanding the special education process and your rights.

The requirements regarding special education are based on state and federal law. The relevant laws are the following:

State Law: The state special education law, popularly known as "Chapter 766" after the session law number under which it was passed in 1972, is contained in the Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) at Chapter 71B. The regulations implementing the statute are found in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) at 603 CMR, Section 28.00.

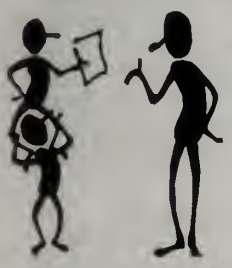
Federal Law: The federal special education law is known as "IDEA" (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). The statute is located in the United States Code at 20 U.S.C. § 1400. In 1997, Congress reauthorized the IDEA and the amended statute is popularly referred to as "IDEA-97." The implementing regulations for IDEA are found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at Chapter 34, Section 300.

The federal and state special education laws are grounded upon six basic principles:

1. Parent & Student Participation
2. Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
3. Appropriate Evaluation
4. Individualized Education Program (IEP)
5. Least Restrictive Environment
6. Procedural Safeguards

In the following section of this document, each of the principles is described:

1. **Parent & Student Participation** – The law provides for many opportunities for parents to be involved in the planning and discussions concerning their child's special education needs, including as an integral member of the Team that discusses eligibility, services, and placement of the student. You are entitled to have Team meetings held at a time and place mutually convenient to you and to other members of the Team. If your child is 14 years of age or older, the district must invite your child to attend Team meetings; if your child is younger than age 14, you may invite your child to Team meetings if you decide it is in his or her best interests. If you are unable to participate in a Team meeting, the district is required to use other methods (such as phone conferencing or other meeting opportunities) to ensure that you have the opportunity to participate in the discussion even if you cannot be present. Parents have rights to consent to or reject proposals for their child's education and to receive information in understandable written form. As the student grows older, he or she begins to have rights to participate in the Team process and in planning for transition to adult life. Additionally, the law entitles students of any age who are receiving special education to participate in the general education program of the school, including participation in school-wide or state-wide assessment programs.



The law does not speak directly to your responsibilities as a parent, but the opportunities that the law provides for your participation are intended to promote a dialogue between you and the school district on behalf of your child. You are expected to share information about your child and the school district is expected to attend to the information you provide and the concerns you present. It is important to emphasize that special education is most successful when it is viewed as an ongoing partnership with all parties having a strong interest in providing the best possible education for the student. Although as a parent you have many rights, it is important to remember that the relationship you build with the school district may endure for many years and a positive, cooperative relationship on the part of both parents and school district personnel is most likely to result in maximum benefit to the student.

2. **FAPE** – Under federal law, students who are eligible for special education are entitled to a FREE, APPROPRIATE, PUBLIC EDUCATION – This concept is known as "FAPE." The FAPE standard for special education services requires the school district to provide instruction tailored to the individual student's needs, with sufficient support services to assist the student to make meaningful educational progress. Any special education services identified for the student are required to be provided at public expense with no cost to the parent. All students in the Commonwealth's public education system, including students with disabilities, are entitled to the opportunity to learn the material that is covered by the academic standards in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.

3. **Appropriate Evaluation** – A student must receive a complete and comprehensive evaluation to determine if the student has a disability and is eligible for special education and, if eligible, to assist in determining appropriate special education and related

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Parent's rights brochure

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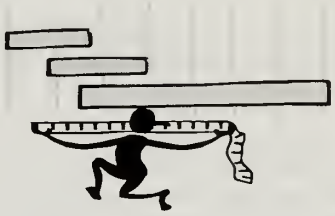
services that may be necessary. Parents who have a concern about their child's development or have a suspicion about a possible disability may refer their child for an initial evaluation. Special words need not be used in making a referral for an initial evaluation. Upon receipt of such a request for an initial evaluation, the school district must send notice to the parent and must seek the parent's consent to conduct an evaluation. (A school district will rarely have occasion to refuse to conduct an initial evaluation and may do so only if the parent or other individual making the referral has no suspicion of a disability or is not concerned about the student's development.) Where appropriate, the school district may also provide the parent with information concerning other supportive services that may better suit a particular student's needs. However, a school district may not refuse to evaluate a student who has been referred for an evaluation as described above, on the basis of a pre-referral program or in order to try other instructional support activities or for any other reason. Additionally, the law provides for periodic reevaluations to ensure that the student is benefiting from and continues to require special education. The parent's consent will always be required prior to these reevaluations.

In Massachusetts, in order to be found eligible for special education, a student must demonstrate the presence of a disability (autism; developmental delay; intellectual, sensory, neurological, emotional, communication, physical, or health impairment; or specific learning disability) that prevents the student from making effective progress in education and requires specially designed instruction or related services in order to access the general curriculum. An initial evaluation to determine eligibility will seek sufficient evaluative information to make a fair determination that considers all of these factors.



Although the state testing program, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is an evaluation, it is not a part of the evaluation conducted to determine if the student requires special education. The special education law provides protections to ensure that every student with disabilities is included in state or district-wide testing to ensure that the educational needs of students with disabilities are considered in a systemic way. Therefore, your permission is not required for your son/daughter to participate in MCAS or any other state or district-wide tests. However, during the Team meeting held to develop your child's Individualized Education Program (see #4 below on IEP), you and the other Team members will discuss the best way for your child to participate in the MCAS and note this on your child's IEP.

4. **IEP** – The law provides that the Team develops an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in written form to describe the programs and services that are needed and that will be provided when a student has been determined to be eligible for special education. Your permission will always be requested before any IEP services are provided.

5. **Least Restrictive Environment** – This principle, known as "LRE", means that, if possible, a student who needs special education services should receive those service in the general education environment, with students who do not have special education needs. Further, LRE means that removal from the general education environment should only occur if the nature or severity of the student's special education needs are such that education in general education classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. IDEA-97 strengthened this principle even more by saying that no child should be removed from the general education classroom just because of needed modifications in the curriculum. This means that the Team is strongly obligated to consider how your child can be supported in the general education classroom before even considering serving your child in any other setting.

6. **Procedural Safeguards** – Finally, the law provides a number of procedural safeguards to ensure that parents' and students' rights are preserved, that information is provided on a timely basis, and that services are delivered appropriately. Parents have considerable rights to agree or disagree with proposals of the school district and also have the right to make proposals themselves.

The remainder of this brochure is designed to provide specific detail on the various procedural safeguards of the law.

You are not obligated to read this material, nor are you obligated to exercise one or more of these rights. However, it may be helpful for you to understand the scope of the safeguards available to you. It is our hope that you will use this brochure to help you understand the law, your rights, your responsibilities, and the responsibilities of the school district. No exercise of procedural safeguards, however, substitutes for a positive partnership with the school district.

Right to Receive Written Notice

You have a right to receive written notice within a reasonable time before the school district proposes or refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation or educational placement of your child or the provision of FAPE to your child.

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This means that written notice must be provided in the following specific circumstances:

- When the school district proposes to conduct an initial evaluation or reevaluation.
- In rare cases, when the school district refuses to conduct an initial evaluation or a reevaluation.
- When the school district proposes a new or amended IEP.
- When the school district proposes a change in placement.
- When a student is suspended for more than ten consecutive days in any school year.
- When the school district proposes termination of special education services.
- When the school district refuses to change a previously accepted IEP or placement.
- When the school district makes a finding of no eligibility for special education services.
- When the school district refuses to conduct an assessment at your request.
- When the school district refuses to provide a service you have requested that is not in your child's IEP, or otherwise refuses a request you have made related to the provision of special education to your child.

The written notice must include:

(a) a full explanation of the procedural safeguards available to you under federal special education law (as provided by this brochure);

(b) a description of the action proposed or refused by the school district which includes:

1. an explanation of why the action is proposed or refused;
2. a description of any options the school district considered and an explanation of why those options were rejected;
3. a description of each evaluation procedure, test or record used as a basis for the action proposed or refused;
4. a description of any other factors relevant to the school district's decision.

The notice must be written in simple and commonly understood words and must be in both English and the primary language of the home. Any interpreter used must be fluent in the primary language of the home. When you or your child are unable to read in any language or are blind or deaf, the notice must be made orally, in Braille, in sign language or in writing, whichever is appropriate. If the school district provides you notice orally or in some other mode of communication that is not written language (such as sign language) the school district must keep written documentation that it has provided you notice in such a manner; of the content of such notice; and of the steps taken to ensure that you understand the content of the notice.

Providing Your Written Consent

The school district must obtain your written consent before evaluating your child or before providing your child with special education and related services according to an IEP. Specifically, this means that your consent is required before the school district may conduct an initial evaluation or reevaluation of your child and prior to the initial provision of special education and related services to your child and for any subsequent IEP and placement. Once you have consented to an initial placement in a special education program, if you refuse to provide consent to any subsequent actions related to special education, the school district cannot use your refusal to consent as a basis to deny you or your child any other service, benefit or activity to which you or your child may be entitled. "Consent" means that:

(a) You have been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought in your native language or other mode of communication; and

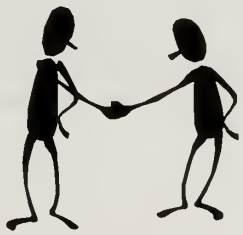
(b) You understand and agree in writing to the carrying out of the activity for which your consent is sought; and

(c) The consent form used by the district describes the activity for which consent is sought and lists the records (if any) which will be released and to whom; and

(d) You understand that it is your voluntary choice to give consent and you may revoke your consent at any time. If you revoke your consent, from that point forward the district must cease the activity to which you had previously consented.

If you refuse your consent:

In most cases your refusal to consent will be fully honored. However, to protect the rights of your child, the law requires the school district to consider the effect of your refusal on the education of your child. At any point after your child is first placed in a special education program, if a school district believes your refusal to consent would deny your child a free appropriate public education (FAPE), the school district must take steps to ensure that FAPE is provided. Such steps may include mediation and/or initiation of a due process hearing as described later in this brochure to resolve the dispute. The school district cannot request a hearing to dispute your refusal to consent to the initial evaluation or initial placement of your child in special education.



Rights associated with consent:

- **You have a right to accept or refuse any proposal to evaluate your child.**
- You have a right to accept or reject a proposed IEP in whole or in part or to meet with school representatives to discuss the IEP during a thirty day period following receipt of the proposed IEP.

- If you accept part of the proposed IEP, the part you accept must be implemented immediately.
- You have a right to accept or reject the placement proposed to deliver the services on the IEP.
- At least a year in advance of the time when your child would graduate from high school, you have a right to discuss your child's proposed high school graduation and the anticipated termination of your child's special education services with school officials. In addition, you have a right to accept or reject that portion of an IEP that proposes graduation, and a right to request mediation or a hearing before the Bureau of Special Education Appeals on the issue of graduation.
- If, at the time that your child is scheduled for a reevaluation (usually every three years), the school district recommends that additional evaluation is unnecessary and asks for your consent to that recommendation, you may refuse that recommendation and request a full or partial reevaluation.

Your Responsibility to Provide Notice to the School District If You Place Your Child in a Private School

Under some circumstances, you may decide that the public school district is not providing an appropriate education for your child (see organizing principle #2 FAPE, above) and you may decide to remove your child from the public school program and place him or her in a private school. If you choose to do this and want the public school district to pay the private school tuition, you are required to notify the school district before you remove your child. You must give this notice either at an IEP meeting or in written form at least 10 business days before you remove your child from the public school program. You must tell the public school why you disagree with the IEP and program that the public school has proposed or provided for your child, and you must state your intention to remove your child and enroll him or her in a private school. If the school asks to evaluate your child prior to removing him or her from the public school program, you must make your child available for such evaluation.

Giving notice to the school district is only the first step in receiving public funding if you remove your child from the public school program. Following such removal, you must prove at a due process hearing that the school district program failed or is unable to provide your child with FAPE in a timely manner and that the private school can provide your child with an appropriate education. If you complete both steps and are successful in proving your case, the Bureau of Special Education Appeals hearing officer may require the school district to use public funds to pay for your child's private school placement.

Right to Independent Education Evaluation (IEE)

When you pay for an IEE:
If you disagree with the school district's evaluation of your child, you have a right to seek an IEE. Parents may seek an IEE at private expense at any time. Upon your request, the public school district must provide you with a list of persons who conduct IEEs in your area of Massachusetts, although you are not limited to using evaluators from that list.

Circumstances under which the school district is required to pay for some or all of the costs of the evaluation:
The state regulations require school districts to finance IEEs for low-income families and to share the costs of IEEs for middle-income families. If your child is eligible for free or reduced cost lunch, then, at your request, the school district will pay for an IEE that is equivalent to the types of assessments done by the school district. If your child does not qualify for a reduced cost lunch, he or she may still be eligible for school district funding, either in whole or in part, depending on your family income. The school district will ask for income information and some validating documentation. Sharing financial information with the school district is completely voluntary on your part. If you choose to share such information, the school district must tell you promptly whether or not you are eligible for full or partial funding of an IEE. Your right to a publicly funded IEE through this income eligibility process will extend for 16 months from the date of the school district's evaluation with which you disagree.

Circumstances under which the school district may pay for the costs of evaluation:
If you request an IEE paid for by the school district and you are not income eligible or do not wish to use the income-eligibility process, you should notify the school district in writing of your request for public payment of an IEE. The school district must respond to your request without undue delay and either agree to pay for the IEE or initiate a hearing with the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA) to show that the school district evaluation was comprehensive and appropriate. If the BSEA agrees with the school district, then the district is not obliged to provide public funds for an IEE. Any IEE that is paid for with public funds must abide by state requirements relating to qualifications of the evaluator and the rates charged for the evaluation.

Consideration of results of IEEs:
If you arrange for an IEE (regardless of whether it is paid for with private funds or public funds) and have the results sent to the school district, the school district must convene a Team meeting within ten school working days of receipt of the evaluation information to consider the evaluation and what, if any, changes should be made to the student's IEP based on the evaluation.

Complaints, Mediations and Due Process Hearings

Complaints or concerns about whether the district is following special education requirements:
The Department of Education encourages you to first attempt to resolve the matter with local school district officials. Contact your school principal, your Administrator of Special Education, or your superintendent to ask for assistance. In some cases, however, you may feel that you need to go outside the district. The Massachusetts Department of Education has a "Problem Resolution System" where you can file complaints or ask for a resolution of a dispute about compliance with a law or regulation. You can contact the Department directly at (781) 338-3700 to file such a complaint. The Department will send you written information and will request a written statement of the problem if you wish the Department to intervene. If you send written information requesting a resolution of your problem, the Department will ensure it is investigated and will send you a letter of its determination within sixty (60) calendar days of receiving your written request. The address for the Department of Education Problem Resolution System is within the box:

Program Quality Assurance Services
Problem Resolution System
Massachusetts Department of Education
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148

Mediation services or hearings:
You have a right to request mediation or a due process hearing conducted by the Bureau of Special Education Appeals (BSEA), whenever there is a dispute between you and your child's school district over the identification, evaluation, placement, proposed IEP, the manner of implementation of the IEP, the provision of a free appropriate public education, or the procedural protections of state or federal law for your child. You may obtain a list of free or low-cost attorneys and advocates to assist you by calling the BSEA at (781) 338-6400.

The school district also has a right to request mediation or a hearing held by the BSEA for the same reasons, except that it cannot request a hearing to dispute your refusal to consent to the initial evaluation or placement of your child in special education.

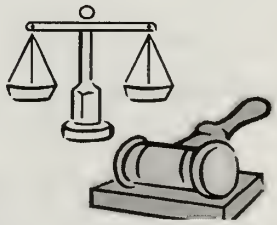
Information about mediation:
Mediation may be requested by either the parent or the school district. Mediation is a voluntary, informal process, conducted under the direction of a BSEA mediator, which is designed to assist you and your school district in reaching an agreement regarding the issue in dispute. If you reach an agreement, it will be written down as a mediation agreement. If no agreement is reached, you may still request a hearing. If you wish to schedule a mediation, or wish more information about mediation, you may call a Department mediator at (781) 338-6400.

Information about hearings:
A parent or school district may request a hearing by sending a written request to the address within the following box:

Bureau of Special Education Appeals
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148

The hearing request should contain the names and addresses of: the parents or guardians and child, the school district's representatives' and any attorneys or advocates involved, as well as a short statement of the reason why the hearing is being requested. A hearing request form will be sent to you if you call BSEA, but it is not necessary to use the form in order to make your hearing request. When you request a hearing, the BSEA will provide you with a list of free or low-cost attorneys and advocates. The BSEA will also send detailed information about your rights and responsibilities in regard to the requested hearing.

Whenever you or the school district requests a hearing, the BSEA will schedule a hearing and notify you and the school district of a mutually convenient time and location. The BSEA will assign an impartial hearing officer to conduct the hearing. The BSEA will provide you with a list of hearing officers and their qualifications upon request.



Hearings are more formal than mediations and involve the introduction of evidence and recorded testimony by witnesses. Following the hearing, the hearing officer will issue a written decision, determining the appropriate educational program or services for the child. That decision is binding on you and the school district, and must be implemented by the school district.

The cost of attorneys and other hearing costs:
The school district will always pay for its share of attorney's fees and hearing costs. The BSEA does not have authority to reimburse you for attorney's fees and/or costs, even if you prevail at the hearing. However, if you prevail, and the BSEA

makes a finding against the district, a court of competent jurisdiction may subsequently award you attorney's fees and associated costs. The court may also limit or refuse your request for such an award depending on the basis for your claim.

Disagreements with the decision of a hearing officer:
If you or the school district disagrees with the hearing decision, it may be appealed in state or federal court. Although there has been no Massachusetts decision determining the statute of limitations for appeals to federal district court, the state's Administrative Procedures Act, M.G.L. c. 30A, §14, provides that an appeal to state superior court must be filed within 30 days of receipt of the decision.

The child's placement during an appeal:
During the time that a hearing request is pending before the BSEA, or if the decision of the hearing officer has been appealed to court, your child will remain in his or her then current educational placement unless you are requesting initial placement for your child in the public school, in which case your child will be placed in the public school. This right to remain in the current placement is called "stay put." Any changes to your child's educational placement or program during this time must be fully agreed to by you and the school district or ordered by a court.

Student Records – Access Rights and Confidentiality

General information about the student record:
The student record consists of your child's transcript and temporary record and includes, among other things, records pertaining to your child's special education eligibility or program. You have several rights relating to your child's student record. You and, under certain circumstances, your child, have a right to inspect and review any and all records relating to your child which are collected, maintained or used by the school district. If your child's record includes information regarding another child you have a right to inspect and review only the information relating to your child. The school district will only limit your access to the student record if the school district has received a legal document that limits your authority in this regard (for example, a divorce or custody decree that limits your access to information about your child). All of the rights associated with the student record are contained in the Massachusetts Student Record Regulations. Those regulations can be found at 603 C.M.R. 23.00 or by requesting a copy of the regulations from the Department of Education. The following summary of information is provided to assist you in attaining a general understanding of the Student Record Regulations.

Your child's rights of access:
Students who are 14 years of age or in the ninth grade have all the rights that parents have under the Student Record Regulations. If a student is from 14 through 17 years of age or has entered the ninth grade, both the student and his or her parent, or either one acting alone, may exercise these rights. Once a student turns 18, the rights accorded parents under the Student Records Regulations become those of the student. However, the parent may continue to exercise these rights unless the student makes a written request to the school principal or superintendent of schools to prevent the parent from doing so. Should the child make such a request, the parent will still retain the right to examine his or her child's record.

Review of the student record:
If you ask to review your child's records, the school must allow you access to those records without any unnecessary delay and, in any event, no later than two consecutive school working days after your request, unless you agree to a longer period of time. Your right to inspect and review your child's student record includes the right to do so before any meeting regarding an IEP or due process hearing relating to the identification, evaluation or placement of your child. Your right to inspect and review your child's student record includes the right to:

(a) Obtain copies of any information contained in the student record upon request. The school district may charge a reasonable copying fee, not to exceed the costs of reproduction, as long as the fee does not effectively prevent you from exercising your right to inspect and review the record. The school district may not charge a fee to search for or retrieve information relating to special education.
(b) Meet with professionally qualified school personnel upon request and have any of the contents of the student record interpreted.
(c) Have your representative inspect, review and interpret your child's record with your specific, written informed consent.

Access to the student record:
The school district is required to keep a record of parties who have obtained access to your child's student record, in whole or in part. You have the right to review this record log. Unless student record information is to be deleted or released, the log requirement does not apply to school personnel whose teaching, counseling, clerical or administrative responsibilities require access to your child's student record. Upon your request, the school district must inform you about the types and locations of student record information for your child.

Changing information in the student record:
You have the right to add information, comments, data or any other relevant written material to the student record. You have the right to make a written request that the school district delete or amend information contained in the student record and/or to have a conference with the principal or designee to make your objection known. You have a right to a written decision on your request within a week of your conference with the principal or from the date the school receives your written objection if there is no conference. You may appeal to the superintendent of schools if the school district does not agree with your position. You also have a right to include in your child's student record a statement commenting on the decision or setting forth your reason for disagreement with the content of the record. Any such statement must be maintained by the school district as part of your child's student record as long as the record or contested portion of the record is kept by the school district.

Educational Surrogate Parent Program

If a child is in the custody of a state agency, the Department of Education has a responsibility to ensure there is an adult with no conflicting interests to make special education decisions on behalf of the child. In such circumstances, the Department will determine if it is appropriate to appoint an educational surrogate parent for the child. If appointed, the educational surrogate parent has the same rights and responsibilities as a parent in special educational matters relating to a student, including the right to represent the student as part of the special education processes of identification, evaluation and educational placement and in the provision of a free appropriate public education. The Department of Education appoints Educational Surrogate Parents through its Educational Surrogate Parent Program (ESPP). To contact the ESPP, please call (508) 792-7679.

Transfer Of Responsibility Upon Reaching the Age Of Majority

Massachusetts' law recognizes that a child has reached adulthood upon his or her eighteenth (18th) birthday. When a student turns age 18, therefore, all of the decision-making rights that you have as a parent transfer to your adult child unless a court has appointed a legal guardian for your child. The school district must discuss with both you and your child the impact of this transfer of rights approximately a year in advance of the student's eighteenth birthday. As the parent of an adult child with a disability, both you and your son or daughter will continue to receive all the required notices from the school, and you will continue to have access to your son or daughter's educational records.

Discipline

In general, if your child has violated the school's disciplinary code, the school may suspend or remove your child from his or her current educational placement for a period not to exceed ten (10) consecutive school days in any school year. If your child possesses, uses, sells or solicits illegal drugs on school grounds or at a school-sponsored event or carries a weapon to school or a school function, the school district may place your child in an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 calendar days. If your child has been placed in an interim alternative education setting as a result of a disciplinary action, your child may remain in the interim setting for a period not to exceed 45 days. Thereafter, your child will return to the previously agreed-upon educational placement unless either a hearing officer orders another placement or you and the school agree to another placement.

Anytime the school wishes to remove your child from his or her current educational placement for more than ten (10) consecutive school days in any school year, or for more than ten cumulative days when a pattern of removal is occurring, this constitutes a "change of placement." A change of placement invokes certain procedural protections under the IDEA, the federal special education law. These include the following:

(a) Prior to any removal that constitutes a change in placement, the school district must convene a Team meeting to develop a plan for conducting a functional behavioral assessment that will be used as the basis for developing specific strategies to address the problematic behavior. If a behavioral intervention plan has been previously developed, the Team shall review its implementation and modify it if necessary.

(b) Prior to any removal that constitutes a change in placement, the school district must send you a full statement of your procedural rights (this brochure) and inform you that the Team will consider whether or not the behavior that forms the basis for the removal is related to the student's disability. This consideration is called a "manifestation determination." Remember that you, as the parent, always have the right to participate as a member of the Team.

Consideration of whether the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability:
The law provides that the Team must consider evaluation information, observational information, the student's IEP and placement, and must determine whether the behavior prompting disciplinary removal was a manifestation of the student's disability. The Team considers if the student understood the impact and consequences of the behavior, and further considers if the student's disability impaired the student's ability to control his or her behavior.

If the Team determines that the behavior was related to your child's disability, then your child may not be removed from the current educational placement (except in the case of weapon or drug possession or use) until the IEP Team develops a new IEP and decides upon a new placement and you consent to that new IEP and placement.

If the Team determines the behavior was not related to your child's disability, then the school may suspend or otherwise discipline your child according to the school's code of student conduct, except that for any period of removal exceeding ten days, the school district must provide your child with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The school district must determine the educational services necessary for FAPE and the manner and location for providing those services.

In the case of a disagreement with the Team's determination:
If you disagree with the Team's decision on the "manifestation determination" or with the decision relating to placement of your child in an interim alternative education setting or any other disciplinary action, you have the right to request an expedited due process hearing from the Bureau of Special Education Appeals.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER THIS INFORMATION

This brochure will be made available regularly whenever your child receives a new or revised IEP, at various other points, and at any time upon request. Additionally, every public school district is required to provide training to parents in the district at least once each year to help parents in understanding the special education requirements. If you have questions about your rights or the rights of your child after reading this brochure, we encourage you to contact the special education office of your local school district, or the Massachusetts Department of Education or any of the special education related organizations in the state. Special education is a highly complex and regulated area of education law. Do not expect to be an expert. The detail in the law is intended to protect your child and to help ensure that he or she receives the best educational experience. Please work as much as possible in partnership with the public school district that serves your child. We hope this brochure will be of assistance to you as you take an active role in your child's educational experience.

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